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# The Art Gallery

EXHIBITION OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY OF ARTISTS.

UNQUESTIONABLY the second annual exhibition of this Society is a surprise to its friends. It is an exhibition never approached in America of work by Americans. New York, which has certainly never shown any collection of native work to compare with

this exhibition of the Philadelphia Academy, has reason to look within the door of the splendid and well-filled edifice with peculiar envy, because there is a sense in which all these interesting works should have been her own pride and display; all these contributions should have been parts of an exhibition of the New York "Society of American Artists," and would have been so in the natural course of things, for that body had the first access to the Paris and Munich painters, and made the first application for their regular yearly contributions. But the "American Artists" have lost their hold on the affections of the students residing abroad. At their first exhibition many of these contributors showed their faces, though with a less commanding set-out of works. But it is well known that the "American Artists" have been unfortunate in their policy, and have suffered from want of a definite aim. The students living at Paris were particularly dissatisfied with their treatment, the specific grievance being that no membership, not even an honorary membership, was offered them. "I am sure we did all we could to show our interest," remarked one of them, "signed all sorts of papers and made all sorts of promises, only to find that we had no lot nor part in the organization, and were to be invited or not, one year after another, at the caprice of the messenger of the 'American Artists' for any given season." The "Philadelphia Artists" have done better. Their secretary, P. L. Senat, who takes the trouble and does the work, is a familiar friend of the circle at Paris, having studied under Gérôme there for a couple of years. He has taken the proper pains to keep intact the subtle lines of sympathy and communication which connect the capricious feeling of brotherhood between the continents—a line so wavering, so easily snapped, and so important. And accordingly we see the really powerful young painters, on whom the future of Western art is hanging, deserting in great measure the "American Artists" or contributing in slender dribbles, to pour into the lap of the "Philadelphia Artists" the whole rich budget of their production.

The star-picture of the second Philadelphia exhibition is undoubtedly a landscape—the "Concarneau Road" of Mr. W. L. Picknell, of Boston, a pupil of Gérôme and the late Robert Wylie. This is a tour de force of the most surprising character. The dazzle of a blinding, fainting noonday is expressed with sledge-hammer force. The white dust of the road forms a wedge of almost intolerable brightness far away from the eye over the level Landes, as far as the sight can reach. The usual gutter, and bank covered with bushes and pollards, forms its border on either side; at the extreme distance this road cuts a line of dark oaks, whose black silhouette meets and arches over the highway. A sky of hot dry blue—the word hot being quite applicable to such a blue—hangs over all, the vibratory character of

whose light is expressed by a peculiar sort of stipple, a particled texture that seems to dilate and contract to the eye when you look into it. The road itself, on whose bare quality every influence of the picture depends, is palette-knife work of extreme boldness. A wagon loaded with road-mender's stone is creeping away toward the middle distance, and seems to diminish as it is looked at. The intensely fastidious selection of the broad planes of color, representing the blue, the green, and the dusty white, is so very skilful that light seems to beat up from the canvas and half blind the spectator. One can understand the admiring complaint of the French critic, that blue spectacles were necessary for looking at such a picture. The reception of the canvas at the late Paris Salon exceeded in warmth and intelligent interest anything that can be remembered in French criticism of American work. The late

est eulogy of these kindly critics. No contemporary European painter, for mere stark literal expression of effects of natural light and shade, is doing anything so good to-day. The little picture of Picknell's recently bought by Mr. Robert Gordon is nearly like this in motive, but it requires the full breadth of such a large canvas as that shown at Philadelphia to give the weightiness and largeness of blaze proper to the "motif"—to unroll its sheets of light, and blind the eye with its overbearing density of splendor. The same artist has a large upright-shaped picture in the exhibition, "The Edge of the Morass." Here are strangely-shaped, divergently-branching lace-patterns of trees, with the play of their boughs printed against the sky, and clothed with an ivy-like growth of close-clinging leafage. The picture is a close, conscientious, and beautiful rendering of nature; but there is no surprise,

no shock, as with the "Concarneau"; there is no Fortuny-like fencing with the sunbeams. Altogether we feel that Picknell is a name that can never more be forgotten. He has come before his countrymen with a feat of power such as no other American attempts, has represented an effect of nature that is without prettiness or pettiness in the slashing knife-work of a giant. We thank him for the baldness and starkness of the effect he has selected; it is a needed lesson for our picture-buying public, who have too long been enamored of drawing-card compositions and tinted chromatic effects of pastoral.

Mr. Bridgman, one of the most popular of Gérôme's pupils, makes an imperial display. Each of his contributions has been a remarked picture at some French Salon. Two are reconstructions of ancient manners and customs—the "Burial of a Mummy" and "Royal Pastimes at Nineveh." Unlike most of the archæological painters, Mr. Bridgman is a technist of fine ability; this show sespecially in the open-air scenes; it is obvious that in placing a landscape background behind and around his figures, in enveloping them with harmonious light and air, this young genius excels his master. Gérôme was unable to invent for the backgrounds of his "Promenade of the Harem" and "Egyptian Prisoner" such admirable scenery, so felt in the spirit of the true landscapist, as we see here in the "Burial" or in the "Tents of the Nomads." The interior scene, "Algerian Women Weaving a Bournous at Biskra," is more confused, less certain of itself—it needs a reviving breath of sunny air from Velasquez's "Spinners." But the art of any or all of these scenes is most brilliant, most satisfying. It is rarely we find pictures of erudition painted with this felicity, or pictures that are painted with felicity furnished with such erudition.

The lovely scene of twilight tents and reposing Kabyles at Biskra is worthy of the lost pencils of Belly and Marilhat and Fromentin. As for the archæology-pictures, we suppose them to be unimpeachable "qua" archæology, and we know them to be more than satisfactory in pure painting quality. Mr. James Gordon Bennett and the institution that has purchased the "Nineveh" are to be congratulated, not simply as patrons of American art, but as possessors of works that it is independently a credit to their taste to have selected. The "Nineveh" represents the Assyrian king standing in the circus ready to kill a lion that has just been let out from its "paradise" or preserve. Another animal, the witness of his prowess, lies dying near his feet, and the circus, the gateways with storied sculpture, the crowd, the lion-cage with portcullis managed by a slave, are most intelligently studied, with a splendid shock of hot Assyrian light over all.



"THE PAGE." BY MARY FRANKLIN.

Directeur des Beaux-Arts, the Marquis de Chennevières, expressed himself as follows, in a review of the Salon written for the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts": "M. Picknell, American, has here a certain 'Route de Concarneau,' quite white with powder between its banks of green, which exerts a violent attraction by its illusive quality. This style of painting is derived, it may be, from the furnace of the enamel-worker; but out of its system of glazings and pumice-stone rubbings it has obtained a kind of deceptive effect and a prodigy of tone to which we have been unaccustomed since Decamps' day!" The better-known critic, Philippe Burty, wrote of the same picture in "L'Art": "M. Sargent and M. Picknell are the most highly-gifted among the Americans we have observed, and have exhibited the proof of acquirements quite personal and individual." The painting, on a view of it on the exhibition wall, bears out the high-



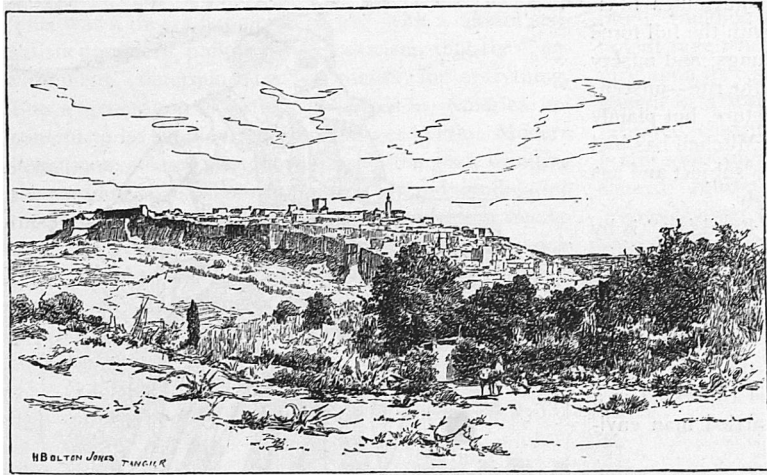
The "Burial" is set in an evening Nile-scene of most melancholy beauty. The freshly-emblazoned and gilded corse, high on its catafalque surrounded by extravagant mummies and by tranquil priests, is happy in its

tudes he invents most prodigally, most diversely, most descriptively; the study of the human figure as a solid is still a little inconvenient and teasing to him.

Mr. Charles Sprague Pearce adds to these revivals of ancient customs by his very Egyptian, very archæological "Lamentations over the First-Born." The picture is severe, positive, studious; but as it was seen in New York, at the first exhibition of the "American Artists," there is no necessity of reviewing the strong, graphic effect it made at that time. Mr. Pearce contributes four other pictures.

Mrs. Sarah B. Dodson, who contributed a wondrously clever decorative subject to the "American Artists' " initial exhibition, is seen here with that and several others to better it. What could be more unexpected than that a quiet lady of the Quaker City, imprisoned during early life in the strictest traditions, should sud-

denly bloom out, after a short residence in Paris, into a full-blown Louis-Quinze spirit, fit to decorate with Boucher-like cupids the bedsteads carved by Boule and Bérain, or to paint amoretto on the sedan-chairs of



"TANGIERS." BY H. BOLTON JONES.

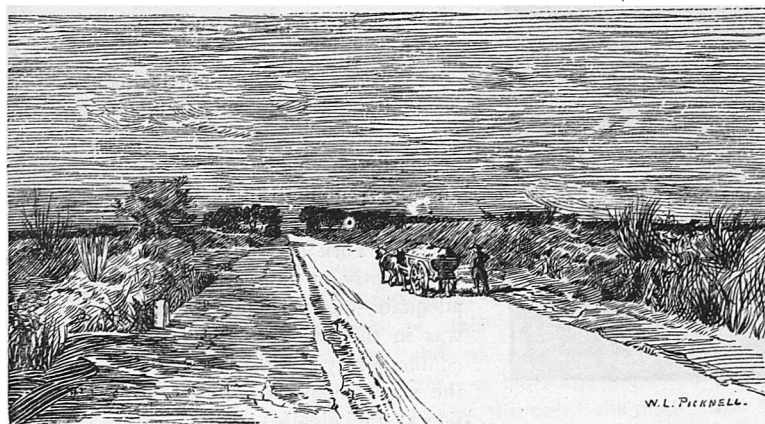
serene and tender last passage over the earth. Our illustration shows the artist's drawing of a group—a couple of priests performing their rites at the mummy's head, beside the canopic jars which contain the four principal entrails, one dedicated to each divinity. The shaven-headed priest here represented seems studied from the celebrated wooden statue, six thousand years old, called the "Village Sheikh," and kept by Marietta at Boulak. Without amounting to positive genius in technic, these various pictures proved, by their adequacy in a very wide range, that Mr. Bridgman is one of the most accomplished painters of the day, be it in archaism or ethnology. The names of three or four world-renowned artists spring to the lips for comparison; but it is better to mention nobody, and let the young and studious American repose on the laurels he has so ably won.

The efforts of Mr. Blashfield provoke a certain contrast with those of Mr. Bridgman. Two large and important ones are here, besides a couple of minor works, the "Besieged Hailing their Deliverers" and "Fencing Lesson of the Roman Ladies." The last recalls to the mind all that scathing passage of Juvenal in which he reviles the women of Nero's and Otho's time for practising the sports of the palæstra and circus, begriming their fair skins with sand and perspiration, feeding on the rank food of the gladiator, and carrying back to their husbands the greasy reek of the arena. Here we see a stalwart and superb Roman woman, armed with the net of the retiarius, preparing to throw the heavy meshes over a beautiful adversary, under the tutelage of a fencing-master, who has the coarse, sinewy comeliness of a dancing-teacher and ring-master combined. The other, a still more crowded scene, shows the ramparts of an antique walled city, and women, men, and little children hailing the army of relief with ecstasies of joy. A few years ago no American whatever could have composed or controlled such thronged compositions. Let foreign critics say what they please of want of originality, these pictures by a Yankee student are as original as the great bulk of similar ones by cultured artists the world over, and it is wholly unreasonable that our young men, inevitably saturated with European culture, should have to develop a "national" school like the Japanese or the Hindoos. It is not affectation for Americans to choose such themes; the affectation would be in pretending to be red Indians, and coloring with war-paint. Mr. Blashfield, as an executant, remains about where he was when he designed his "Commodus," a hint taken from the exhumation of a now famous statue of a Roman emperor. He is wanting in breadth in solid qualities; he still derives his motives from his old studies of mere attitudes as a decorative artist. Atti-



"BURIAL OF A MUMMY ON THE NILE." BY F. A. BRIDGMAN.

Seigné or Mme. Campan! The lady in question, however, shows this astonishing paradox. Her cherubic groups are graceful, irresponsible, blooming, fit for Fragonard. To show that she is serious enough



"LA ROUTE DE CONCARNEAU." BY WM. L. PICKNELL.

at heart, meanwhile, she exposes a large and serious subject of "Deborah," almost as large, almost as meditative, as a Sibyl of Michael Angelo's. Her "Deborah" is nobly posed, seriously studied, painted in a rich viscid "bouquet" of colors that reminds now

the same and neighboring regions, and brought back the studies of human and animal life which were wanting to the landscape painter's record of the scenery. The Moquis are specially interesting as being the supposed remnants of the tribes that formerly de-



"JOUEUR DE MANDOLINE." BY W. A. COFFIN.

woman question; the lady who executed this brilliant work should to-day be overwhelmed with orders for church or other decoration, should be climbing with mammoth brushes to the scaffolds over cathedral altars or painting friezes in the dome of the National Capitol.

When mention is made of the "Jairus's Daughter" of Mr. Frank Moss, a life-size group, and of "Juliet in the Friar's Cell," by Theodore Wores (a life-size subject also, a figure hardly inferior to Piloty, and the most considerable envoy of the Munich school), and of the "Young Bacchus," a finely-modelled Ribera-like figure, of natural scale, by Mr. Mowbray, enough is said to show that, with previously-named works, the Philadelphia exhibition contains a group of elaborate, unprovincial, interesting pictures of a kind wholly new to collections of home art.

The pictures here illustrated, besides the Picknell and the Bridgman, are usually of smaller scale, and of that condensed, intimate kind of interest which makes them lend themselves better to the purposes of a reader of a book—less of gallery pictures, and more of friends for a quiet hour.

"The Little Milk Girl," by Lippincott, an accomplished student at Paris, is a charming study of a rustic little wooden-shod model. Of course she is the reckless speculator of the fable, a perpetual warning to all female brokers and investors in women's savings-banks, who counts her gains before they are earned, and who will directly upset, with a push of her little foolish sabot, all her dreams of splendor and castles in Spain.

"Trinity from the River" is Mr. Quartley's superb picture of the Lower Hudson, robed in splendid sunset roses, and containing a foreground passage of inimitable moving water. It has been seen in New York, but never to such advantage, for it is worked up again by the painter, and well hung by the committee.

"Tangiers," by Bolton Jones, is a large crisp noon-effect of a city in the lap of the hills, draping the knees of the mountains with its embroidery of walls and tiled roofs; it is a very crisp, realistic effect of light, torrid in feeling, and starkly sincere in impression.

"A Moqui Trader" is by Mr. Peter Moran, the animal painter; since his brother Thomas made his celebrated expeditions into the cañons of the Colorado with Major Powell, this younger brother has explored

the same and neighboring regions, and brought back the studies of human and animal life which were wanting to the landscape painter's record of the scenery. The Moquis are specially interesting as being the supposed remnants of the tribes that formerly de-

scended into Mexico and produced the splendors seen by Pizarro.

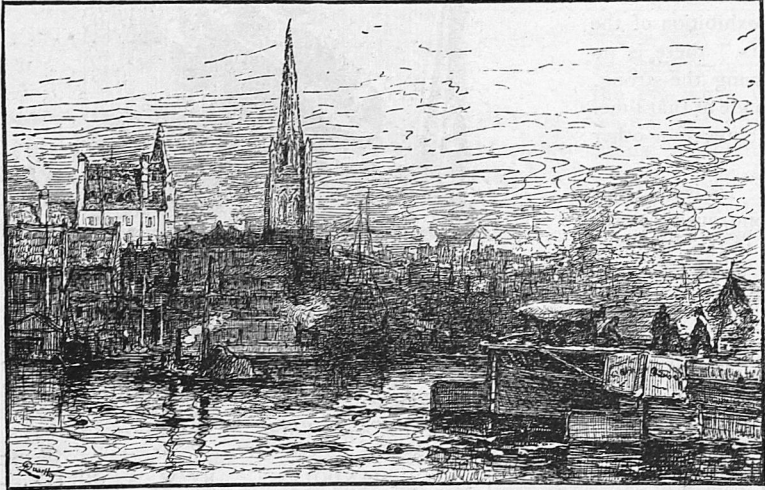
"The Mandolin Player," by W. A. Coffin, belongs to romantic art. This pretty youth might be a "mignon" of Henry II., or the "Steeney" of James II. "The Page" is by Mary Franklin, a lady who has done herself great credit in the schools of the Philadelphia

"A Political Marriage," by John A. Mitchell, is a scene modelled on Calderon's "Her Most High, Noble, Puissant Grace." Childhood oppressed with inappropriate ceremony is the theme. Here we have a couple of infants forced into a marriage of state. Councillors bow profoundly in front, the church contributes blasphemously to the shameful sacrament with the full force of its choristers' lungs, and misery and crime attend the rite—unseen, and out of the picture, but plainly understood. Mr. Mitchell has had a good idea in this subject and has treated it slightly.

"A Bachelor's Breakfast" is by Geo. W. Maynard whose pictures often brighten the exhibitions of our New York Academy. The touch here is sparkling and realistic, and the cynical gaiety of the motif is expressed in a way to make a married man envious.

A picture which excites much discussion is "May Morning in the Park," by Professor Eakins, of the Academy. Space is wanting here to discuss it as it deserves. In expression of daylight, in expression of movement, it is hardly

new direction to make real pictures—that is, to combine figures in compositions. This is, however, in the true course of sound progress, analogous as it is to the



"TRINITY FROM THE RIVER." BY ARTHUR QUARTLEY.

Academy. The subject looks like some dangerously pretty and spoiled figure of the theatre, waiting for a cue in the side-scenes, and exchanging coquettish jests with a fellow-actor.

"A Haunt of the Artists in Brittany," by T. A. Harrison, shows a quaint street and roofs with gables and pignons of immemorial age and style. It is a sketch that takes the spectator travelling.



"A BACHELOR'S BREAKFAST." BY GEO. W. MAYNARD.

"Sad Hours Seem Long" is by the accomplished daughter of an artist-father, Miss Ida Waugh. It shows a romantic young Romeo, just touched with sad, capricious regrets, in his calf-love period, the period of Rosalind, not Juliet.

"Lifting of the Fog" is an excellent, faithful study, all pure nature, by Mr. Senat, the organizer of the ex-

hibition; he has already sold several replicas, an honor which the sincerity and truthfulness of the study merit. "On the Shore," by Melville Dewey, shows the fishing-girl of Boulogne, or Le Pollet, and the brown, loose-jointed French boatman. The scene is a powerful transcript of broad daylight. to be claimed as successful; but it contains a solution of certain problems of design that is perhaps better than a strictly pictorial success, and probably incompatible therewith. The picture is certainly one of popular interest, for it is a careful study of the Tally-ho of Mr. Fairman Rogers, so familiar among the triumphs of the Coaching Club, whether at Newport, New York, or Philadelphia. The groups of portraits a-top are of Meissonier-like fidelity. The coach is a photographic likeness, with its hideous red wheels in staring distinctness. The motion of the horses has been studied, improved, altered, repainted, and perfected during a long year by one of the most experienced anatomists among the ranks of painters; yet the animals do not seem to move. Perhaps they lack just that amount of falsification which is needful to confer illusion. Between this rule-and-line picture and the happy dash of the "Concarneau" what an abyss! Yet both are interesting, both instructive, both conducive to the emancipation of American art. EDWARD STRAHAN.

#### BOSTON CORRESPONDENCE.

THE MUSEUM EXHIBITION—AMERICAN ART CHANGING ITS FIELD—FIGURE PAINTING IN THE FRONT RANK—LANDSCAPE AND STATUARY.

Boston, Nov. 14, 1880.

THE exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts which opened this week, though not so general and complete an exhibition of American art as had been hoped for, is still an important and interesting one. The representation of the artists of New York and other cities of the country is not large, or even adequate—nothing like what it was in the previous exhibition of contemporary American art under the same auspices. The exhibition at Philadelphia, gathering, as it has done, the best work of the best young American artists and

correct curriculum for study in the practice of art. We have flown at the top with our grandiose landscape, with our Coles, Cropseys, F. E. Churches, Bierstadts, Thomas Morans, Harts, and Durants; and, indeed, have achieved no little creditable success with our Kenetts, Innesses, Giffords, McEntees, La Farges, and



"A HAUNT OF THE ARTISTS IN BRITTANY." BY T. A. HARRISON.



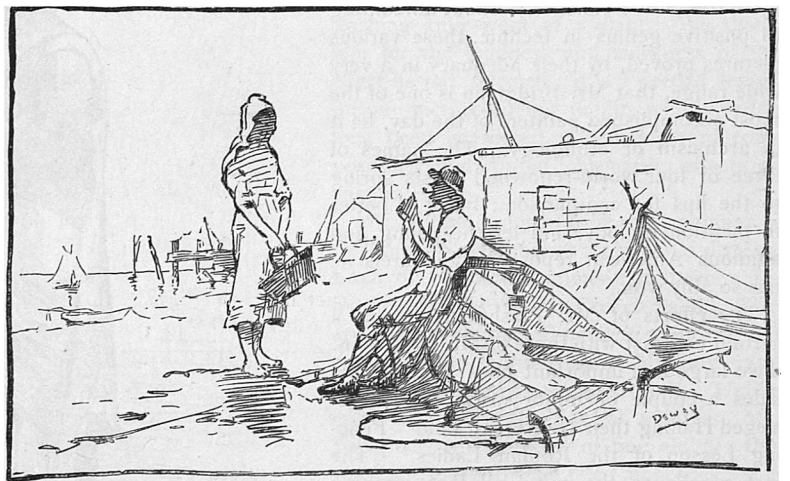
"LIFTING FOG, MT. DESERT." BY P. L. SENAT.

students abroad, has greatly interfered with the success of the Boston "Salon" this year. Yet there is enough of American art here to prove one or two interesting points very conclusively. The most general direction of effort has apparently changed from landscape to the figure. But it has not progressed far enough in the

others of later generations of the old National Academy set. Kindly European critics have invented a theory that America, being an untamed wilderness, nature was the proper study of American art. Destitute of the schools with their masters and models of European critics, without the monuments of an old civilization,



"SAD HOURS SEEM LONG." BY IDA WAUGH.



"ON THE SHORE." BY C. MELVILLE DEWEY.



the palaces, castles, and cathedrals, the galleries of old masters, the vistas of a long and great history, the American savages in art must show their inspiration, according to this theory, as the aborigines show their religion, from the woods and waterfalls, from the great rivers and mountain ranges of the American continent. This was a theory happily in accord with a certain self-satisfied modern philosophy of criticism, that the "environment" determines and accounts for everything. But a generation of artists has arisen in America not content to be simple untutored savages in art. Modern inventions, steam, photography and the rest, bringing the world of civilization nearer together and annihilating distance and isolation, would not but work their revolution even in the National Academy of New York—des-

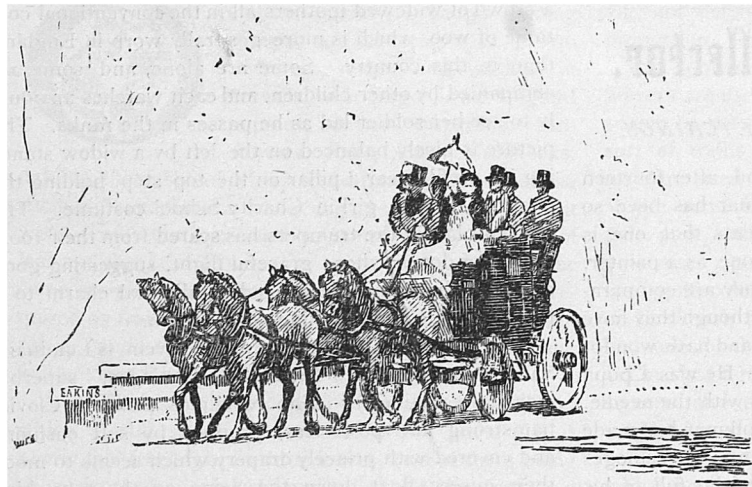
illustrates the value of a national exhibition outside the Academy of New York. It is not necessary to claim that a higher standard will be established; if it be only another and different one, the use and the gain to American art is manifest. The old school here has almost disappeared in the present exhibition. Our old Studio Building trembled with impotent rage when the action of the jury upon its contributions became known in a wagon-load or two of returned contributions, and there is still some angry talk of an exhibition of "refusés" at the Art Club. The prevailing sylvan and pastoral subjects of former exhibitions have

given way in this one to figure pictures, study-heads, and portraits. Not that the landscape art in the exhibition is unimportant; on the contrary, the principle of selection which has shut out the conventional article of studio and composed "decorative" landscape has given the earnest work admitted a higher

collective value. But the eye is first caught here, there, and everywhere by a portrait, a head or a figure, and the interest and comment centre on such subjects. George Fuller's "Quadroon" has the place of honor, as it deserves, although it does not equal several of his former productions in sentiment and in directness of appeal to the feelings. All the same, it is a large, noble conception, executed in a large and noble feeling. The figure has the truth, the reality, the sincere naturalness and simplicity that the name of Millet calls up in the minds of art-lovers. Here is the most admirable drawing without a line being seen, the most thorough knowledge of the figure without any ostentatious anatomical synthesis. The weight of the upper part of the body, resting by one elbow easily upon the knee, is thoroughly felt, and so is the weight and substance of each part of the body and of the whole. The mellow medium of colored light, in which Fuller sees everything in nature, bathes it, too, in a palpable atmosphere. One hesitates to say that the expression of the face is not interesting, so great is the dignified reserve of this artist, and so subtly does the "character" of his subjects make its way at last through "the modesty of nature" to the understanding and sympathy. The little pale

girl-face by J. Alden Weir, so pathetic yet so calm, hanging next to Fuller's picture, on the other hand, makes its shy, demure appeal irresistibly at the first look, although this is an equally masterly example of the art that conceals art. One knows instantly that it is a French face, as confidently as one feels

essentials out of a mass of particulars, and generalizing the true governing expression out of the details, is the test of the artist. It is only when this has been accomplished that the scaffolding can be said to be taken down and the work seen in fair proportions. The old masters left none of the scaffolding up around their portraits. There is a good deal of scaffolding and plenty of the materials of construction to be seen in the portraits of Mr. F. P. Vinton, of this city, pupil of Bonnat. One is forced constantly to think of the work of building, the artist, and his cleverness in putting the



"A MAY MORNING IN THE PARK." BY THOMAS EAKINS.

perate and impervious as has been the resistance of its crusted conservatism—as well as all other institutions. Having become aware of the immense superiority of the European schools, American art-students, determined to "get the best," began flocking thither. The photograph and the ocean steamship, as well as the stars in their courses, have been against the old cultus so long dominating the aboriginal American art from its little stronghold in the National Academy. The younger generations, who have had the teaching of the Paris and Munich ateliers, and become saturated with the atmosphere and influences surrounding them, are creating a new American art.

It will be some time yet, I fancy, before you will have so strong a demonstration of this revolution in your Academy exhibitions as is witnessed in this Boston



"LA PETITE LAITIÈRE." BY W. H. LIPPINCOTT.

Museum exhibition, for the very good reason that the "exempt" Academicians with you will continue to strive to make their landscapes the leading and distinctive features of their exhibitions. Here the old school can keep no hold on the "hue"—the "last ditch" of an outworn creed wherever an academy exists. This

work together. For clever—that is, smart—he most undoubtedly is. He dissects his subject with curious skill and puts him together again with singular ingenuity; only he is not quite the same man again; has not the nobility of the original creation of God, for anything God has made has a certain nobility. The mortar and piecing appear; he is Mr. Vinton's man, while Mr. Weir's, I should say, would be likely to be always the man himself, or perhaps the man's better self. I say this because Mr. Vinton is getting to be recognized as our leading portraitist, and must be held up to the high-



"A POLITICAL MARRIAGE." BY JOHN A. MITCHELL.



"A MOQUI TRADER." BY P. MORAN.